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ABSTRACT

This document describes the Migrant Education Secondary Assistance Project's second outreach meeting, which was held in conjunction with an interstate counselors' workshop. The meeting, one of a three-part series, addressed student mobility, the most perplexing problem of migrant youth. Mobility is the major characteristic that makes migrant students different from their classmates and other youth at risk. Although much has been done to deal with general mobility problems, individual attention is still required for students who move from school to school. Participants in this meeting identified problems and solutions that they encountered in dealing with migrant youth. In most cases, the suggested solutions required programmatic changes in either school district policy or migrant education program assistance. In other cases, solutions indicated the need for ongoing and increased interstate coordination. Recommendations include improvement of secondary services; a national portable assisted study program and a credit make-up system; enhancement of the Migrant Student Record Transfer System; and improved identification and recruitment of secondary students at risk. (TES)

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EXPLORING MOBILITY ISSUES

OUTREACH REPORT

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RC 017524

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EXPLORING MOBILITY ISSUES

SECOND OUTREACH MEETING REPORT

Prepared and Written by
Susan Morse, MESA Consultant

Authorized by
the Migrant Education Secondary Assistance (MESA) Project
under a contract from the United States Department of Education,
Office of Migrant Education
to the Florida Department of Education
Federal Compensatory Education

BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center
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Jesse Vela

And special consultants: Kenneth Frye, Thomas Ryan and Lila Shapiro

And, of course, this project would not have been possible without the cooperation of the state directors of Migrant Education. Many thanks!

The information reported herein was prepared pursuant to a contract with the United States Department of Education. However, the opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Department of Education should be inferred.

PREFACE

The Migrant Education Secondary Assistance (MESA) project convened three special "outreach meetings" to give migrant educators an opportunity to explore problems and issues, discuss emerging trends, and share promising secondary education practices. Each of the meetings focused on a particular topic germane to migrant secondary education. The topics included:

Characteristics of Secondary Migrant Students
October 24-26, 1988
Silver Bay, New York

Exploring Mobility Issues
November 14-15, 1988
McAllen, Texas

Current Practices: Future Directions
May 3, 1989
Portland, Oregon

The meetings were held in conjunction with other Migrant Education activities. The first outreach meeting was held in conjunction with the New York State Migrant Education Conference. Special thanks for the logistics go to Ms. Molly Nye and Ms. Pat Ward, conference coordinators. The MESA project was graciously welcomed as part of the conference and included as a special strand. The second meeting was held in conjunction with an interstate counselors' workshop. Representatives from approximately twenty states were able to provide MESA with valuable information regarding mobility issues. MESA's inclusion in the conference was made possible by the support of Mr. Jesse Vela, Director of the Texas Migrant Interstate Program. The third meeting was held at the National Migrant Education Conference in Portland, Oregon. MESA staff thank Ms. Sharon Huck and Mr. Merced Flores, conference coordinators, for including the outreach meeting on the National Conference agenda. The national base of the conference gave migrant educators from across the country the opportunity to participate in the MESA project.

The meetings would not have been possible without Ms. Susan Morse, consultant on interstate programs, for serving as facilitator for the three meetings. She is very skilled at involving participants in the discussions, keeping participants on task and in analyzing information.

The executive summary and outreach meeting report on "Exploring Mobility" are included in this report.

Robert Lynch, Director
BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center

Executive Summary

Exploring Mobility Issues

Since "the trouble with migrant students is that they move!", according to Frank Kazmierczak, P.A.S.S. Coordinator, it seemed critical to address the characteristic of migrant students that makes them different from most other youth at risk, and that distinguishes their lifestyle from that of their classmates. Mobility continues to be the most perplexing characteristic of migrant youth, and related problems seem to be among the most difficult to resolve. Although much has been done to resolve mobility problems, individual attention is still required to assist students that move from school to school.

The outreach meeting on Exploring Mobility Issues, was held, appropriately, in the state that sends more students to other states than any other; it was held in conjunction with an interstate counselors' workshop. Many of the participants were counselors who work with migrant youth on a daily basis.

The meeting was extremely productive in identifying the continuing problems encountered by migrant youth, in addressing the obstacles they encounter, and in identifying solutions to many of these issues. In most cases the solutions suggested would require programmatic changes in either school district policy or Migrant Education program assistance. In other cases the solutions point to ongoing and increased interstate coordination.

It was the sincere wish of the participants, many of whom encounter the problems cited, daily, that the recommendations in this report be heard and acted upon.

Exploring Mobility Issues

Second Outreach Meeting
Report

Migrant Education Secondary Assistance (MESA) Project

November 14, 15, 1988
McAllen, Texas

The goal of the Second Outreach Meeting was to identify issues relating to mobility which impede the success of migrant secondary school students, and to make recommendations which will lead to the diminishing of the negative impact of mobility on migrant youth.

The outreach meeting was planned in conjunction with the Texas Migrant Interstate Program's annual workshop for counselors and secondary personnel from Texas and the states receiving Texas students.

Opening Session

Jesse Vela, Director of the Texas Migrant Interstate Program, opened the meeting with an explanation of the cooperative plan for the meeting. **Rolland Mielke,** Acting Director of the Migrant Education Secondary Assistance (MESA) project and the MESA staff, with **Pat Hogan**, the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) from the United States Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education, provided an overview of the MESA contract.

Mary Kernel, Director of the P.A.S.S. program in Washington state, and chair of the Interstate P.A.S.S. committee, and **Frank Kazmierczak,** P.A.S.S. Coordinator, spoke about the program. The Portable Assisted Study Sequence (P.A.S.S.) is presently available in approximately twenty states. It provides prepared packets each equivalent to a semester of high school course work. These provide a means of credit make-up for migrant secondary students.

Dr. Shirley Crook from the University of Texas at Austin shared the new courses developed through the Texas Migrant Education Program as a dropout prevention and credit make-up system. These materials are similar to P.A.S.S. materials and it is hoped that Dr. Crook will become involved in the Interstate P.A.S.S. Committee and that the materials and ideas can be shared among the states. These programs offer credit make-up options for migrant students who lose all or partial credit due to mobility.

Exploring Mobility Issues

The second session was entitled, *Exploring Mobility Issues*. In the opening activity, participants identified their own experiences and feelings about mobility. Participants were essentially positive about moves, especially those made as adults, versus those made when they were young and not involved in the decision to move.

Participants identified some the positive characteristics that they developed as a result of moving. They expanded awareness and interest in other people and places. They dealt with discrimination, built character, and became more adaptable. Participants reported that they had gained responsibility and valued their bilingualism and color.

Some of the negative characteristics that participants associated with moving include stress, isolation, disorientation, and culture shock. They also experienced language barriers, discrimination, humiliation, and lack of confidence. Some of the other problems include no money, no work, bad housing, car trouble, no health insurance or workmen's compensation, missing school, lacking credits and leaving friends.

With the help of **Susan Morse**, facilitator, the group identified the major issues affecting migrant secondary students who move.
Each participant composed a list of up to eight issues, and then worked with a partner to combine and prioritize that list.

Mobility Issues: (summary of lists)

1. No acceptance of partial credit
2. No acceptance of any credit other than regular school day work
3. Parent ignorance or lack of concern about child's education
4. Discrimination against those of Indian heritage

5. Delayed entry--"With our harvest in the fall, students miss the first 5-6 weeks of school. Teachers often are reluctant to, or refuse to accept that much make-up work."
6. Our state doesn't put partial credit on the MSRTS forms.
7. Migrant teachers are not adequately trained in using the MSRTS forms.
8. Regular classroom teachers don't know the MSRTS exists.
9. The stress of moving
10. More direction for receiving states about what to offer students
11. Granting of credits (who does it?)
12. Should credits or accrued hours be transferred?
13. Smooth transfer of credits between states
14. Shot/health records/ school admittance
15 Cultural ignorance -by both sides? (brown in white society)
16 Language (lack of English)
17. Low self-esteem
18. Priority needs for food and shelter

From this brainstorming process, eight of the most common mobility issues were identified and the group began the process of identifying solutions to the problems.

Panel Discussion

The next session was a panel discussion. The panelists were **Joe Garza, Roy Ramos, Lolly Layton, Oralia Gonzalez** and **Merced Flores**. **Tomas Yanez** and **Bob Lynch** were moderators. The panelists were asked to express their concerns about interstate mobility.

Some of the issues and questions raised by the panelists and audience members follow:

Issue: *How can funding be provided for services in low impact areas? Response: There are several models for services to low impact areas. They include awareness and skills training to district staff in low impact areas, resource specialists serving multiple districts, coordination with other agencies for services, special events, trainings and conferences for students from a broad geographic area. (ie. leadership conferences).*

Issue: *Excellence in Education--How are reforms affecting migrant students? Do we demand excellence from the school in regard to services*

for migrant students? Is Migrant Child Education a priority for the schools?

Response: *Undoubtedly excellence in education movements that are focusing on measureable outcomes, rather than on the improvement of teaching effectiveness to all students are leaving 'at risk 'students further behind, or forcing them out. Most states are beginning to come to terms with the initial negative impact of these programs on ' at risk' students and are revising their legislation, and/or including additional assistance and alternative programs for these students. Migrant Education Programs should serve as watchdogs for their clients to assure that these reforms are including migrant students and are of benefit to them. Congruence among programs is desirable if provisions for the special needs of migrant students are included.*

Issue: *The use of MSRTS varies in different states. Can some uniformity be established?*

Response: *There are many components of the MSRTS. Not all states require completion of all of them, due to limited staff time. Priorities could be established among states, or some underused components could be eliminated. An MSRTS Utilization study has recently been conducted and a report will be issued soon.*

Issue: *Can students who migrate without their families to work in the fields be served?*

Response: *Students who began migrating alone deriving active status from moves with their family, can maintain their active status as long as they continue to move annually. If they stop moving they can remain formers for five more years, but cannot qualify as actives again based on migrancy without parents.*

Issue: *What other services are available for these formerly migrant youth?*

Response: *Migrant 402 Department of Labor, Job Training Corps and JTPA.*

Issue: *Can Northern states grant the credits for the spring semester?*

Response: *Whenever possible states should grant complete credits by consolidating hours from previous schools and issuing full semester credit and then entering credits on MSRTS.*

Issue: *How can we help counselors and registrars award credit more often?*
Response: *We need good forms for credit transfer and acceptance which include date of birth, grade level, spring or summer work, what courses are needed next, and clarification of things such as, "Is the English class a literature or grammar course?'*

Issue: *Is it possible to have computer hookups to the schools to access information from MSRTS easily?*
Response: *Computers are being hooked up in many of the larger districts in Texas, and programs can also request information through the 800 number to Little Rock, Arkansas (MSRTS terminal).*

Issue: *Do we help the schools to abnegate responsibility for migrant children when we refer to them as "our" kids, rather than students of the schools?*
Response: *Possibly. This is why the role of the advocate has been employed more at the secondary school level by Migrant Eduation programs. The advocate negotiates on behalf of the student with the school, with the objective of encouraging the school to provide needed and appropriate services and to assume the responsibility for the child's education.*

Review of Current Literature on Mobility

Susan Morse provided an overview of the current literature on mobility (provided to the participants in their folders). The group then returned to the discussion of mobility issues.

The facilitator observed that the mobility issues discussed appeared to fall into three categories:

Mobility Issues:

1. **Student Issues** --Problems having an impact on the affective development of the student

adjustment
discrimination
community services
parental involvement/education

II. **Institutional Issues**-- Problems resulting from school system policies that our counterproductive to the needs of migrant youth
credit acceptance and exchange
incomplete records
late entry/early departure
no night or summer programs
poor identification
rigid state and local requirements

III. **National/Interstate Issues**--Problems that may be addressed on an interstate and national level.
ineffective use of MSRTS
limited ID&R
limited credit make-up systems/ P.A.S.S.
poor communication with sending and receiving schools

A problem solving technique was used to find solutions in each of the three mobility areas.

Problem Solving:

STUDENT ISSUES

For the first category, the problem was stated as: Mobility traumatizes migrant youth.

The goal: To assure a comfortable transition for migrant students when moving.

Solutions suggested were:

-Provide information prior to move to parents, students, and the school.
-Make students feel welcome.

-Train migrant and non-migrant personnel to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity to the special characteristics of migrant youth.
-Arriving families should receive visits from the school, and invitations to school events
-Students should be provided with a contact person, both at the sending and receiving sites
-Recruiters should be well trained and have a personal interest in the families and lots of information and resources.
-Other students (migrant or non) should serve as welcomers, or peer buddies to help new students adjust
-Use the established or a migrant welcome wagon and kit to introduce new families to the community and provide essentials, and health articles
-Find ways to maintain communication with friends (postcards, letter writing projects in classes) for both the mover and the friend left behind
-Provide parent training in adjustment strategies for moving, and in ways to advocate for themselves in the new school district and community
-Highlight positive aspects of moving, incorporate geography, and discussions like those shown in the Mr. Rogers' "You Are Special" shows on mobility into classroom activity. (These videotapes were commissioned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for migrant children and cover the topics of going to a new school, speaking different languages, and saying goodbye to friends.)
-Send care packages (school supplies) with students, send necessary credit data, MSRTS and health data with kids.

<u>Absurd suggestions:</u>

put beepers on students
pay families better so they can stay in nice places
take best friends along on the trip
have a contest to make enough money to put one family in a motel

INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

The eight issues summarized from information gathered the previous day were reworded as goals.

GOAL 1 Increase support services and counseling at sending and receiving sites. (This goal was addressed in combination with number 7, see Goal 7)

GOAL 2 Improve ID&R of Junior High and Secondary Students in sending and receiving states.

Suggested Solutions

-When one elementary child is identified, other siblings including dropouts should be identified too, if they are eligible.
-COE (Certificate of Eligibility) family forms should be used to identify all children (ages 3 through 21) in or out of school.
-Advanced notification forms are helpful.
-Directories of programs help counselors identify contact people.
-A contact person should be designated in each state, someone that will be available year round.
-Year round recruiters, recruiters available state/region wide should be available to cover non-served areas and non-agricultural areas.
-There should be consistency in eligibility criteria/determination (ie. length of stay), national guidance and training by ID&R project.
-Look for formers, non-qualifying movers.
-Eliminate "intent" as an aspect of identification of migrancy in the regulations.
-Share harvest schedules among different states.
-Provide students with ID cards.

GOAL 3 Raise teacher/staff expectations for migrant students

Suggested Solutions:

-Continuous Awareness level training --positive accomplishments, progress to include "barriers" these students have to overcome to stay at same level as other students
- Start awareness in teacher training programs at colleges

-Set up teacher-student guide/guidee programs to provide advocate for student and student-teacher relationships. This helps ensure migrant and district teacher involvement with the migrant students.
-Develop equity training (cultural and gender equity training) and provide training for staff.

GOAL 4 Improve communication between sending and receiving sites

Suggested Solutions:

-Receiving states should know who the contact person is at the LEA (sending state-Local Education Agency). This person should be a year round employee.
-Computers should be placed at the LEAs.
-Staff Training -migrant program and non-migrant staff
-Utilization of advanced records by LEAs
-Supplement MSRTS via phone calls and written data
-Distribution of all data among LEAs

Contact person for this goal: Fernando Cruz, Laredo ISD,1618 Houston, Laredo, TX (512) 727-4401

GOAL 5 Increase parental involvement, education and parent-school coordination

Suggested Solutions: (best bets are starred *)

-Strong PACs (Parent Advisory Councils) are a tool for recruitment
-Provide door prizes - bingo
*Have awards banquet meeting with food for graduates, give awards, completion certificates.
-Get administrators to fund parental involvement activities
-Provide bilingual materials for parents
*Train Parents to work with and train other parents
*Provide parent education programs in migrant camps
-Summer school programs may have fewer distractions and learning may carry over to September

Contact: Anne Salerno, BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center, Holcomb Building, Geneseo, NY 14454, 1-800-245-5681

GOAL 6 Develop policies to enhance graduation and credit acceptance (ie. late entry, early departure policies)

Suggested Solutions:

-State Board of Education rules need to be developed to provide guidelines for credit accrual and attendance.
-Awareness level training is needed for counselors, principals and administrators at local, regional, and state levels
-District policies are too varied. The state should set up one policy for the whole state.
-Texas should establish a uniform policy for early withdrawal, same withdrawal date (1 week before May), same withdrawal form (through TEA (Texas Education Agency).
-Migrant programs should offer more classes or ways for students to earn more credit.
-LEAs need to reserve space for arriving migrant students in the regular courses.

Contact: Ray Zuniga, Migrant Counselor, PSJA, Pharr San Juan Alamo, Texas 78577 (512) 783-2240

GOAL 7 Increase number and flexibility of programs for secondary students in sending and receiving sites.

Suggested Solutions:

*More P.A.S.S. courses-- more flexibility for completion (states)
*More group counseling , ie. study skills and college preparation (local)
-Upward Bound programs (Federal)
-University Outreach Programs (states)
*Pregnancy/Alternative schools (local)
*More evening schools
-Expand summer program (maybe a student can earn 1 whole credit) (states)
-New programs where students can study and work at the same time (i.e., JTPA)
-Obstacle: money for new programs

Contact: J.R. Garza, McAllen Memorial High School, 101 East Hackberry, McAllen, TX 78501, (512) 687-7281

GOAL 8 Improve credit acceptance and exchange

Suggested Solutions:

-The last school should award credit based on withdrawal grades
-Know your contact person at the LEA (Local school site sending/receiving)

INTERSTATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The group then focused on final recommendations to be made for consideration at the national (and interstate) level. The group had many suggestions and concerns, which fell into the categories listed below:

SUMMARY -- FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Interstate Coordination

-National credit accrual coordination should be provided (possibly through an interstate coordination project).
-Establish a committee by NASDME to set priorities for national minimum services to migrant secondary students.
-Use interstate programs to help Migrant Education increase coordination with other federal (and non-federal) services which impact migrant students.
-Receiving states (and school districts in all states) should complete and consolidate credits whenever possible.
-Funding should be provided for development and updating of directories of programs in different states to increase interstate communication.
-Provide training and establish training priorities for Program Development Centers on secondary issues.
-Fund and support interstate projects like the Texas Migrant Interstate Program (one in each sending state?)
-Increase opportunities for national networking by funding coordination meetings, teaming, visits and interstate projects.

Improvement of Secondary Services

-Increase the emphasis on secondary services at the national level.
-Increase the emphasis on dropout services at the national level.

-Increase the funding for HEP and CAMP programs.
-Evaluation and needs assessments processes should be improved at the national level.

P.A.S.S. /Credit Make-up Systems

-Support a National P.A.S.S. program or the coordination of state P.A.S.S. programs, nationally, to assure credit make-up alternatives for all migrant students and in order to:
    -coordinate P.A.S.S. curriculum development and use
    -facilitate interstate transfer and completion of credits
    -enhance dissemination of the P.A.S.S. model in additional states.
    -advocate to state agencies, and districts, for the acceptance of P.A.S.S.

MSRTS (Migrant Student Record Transfer System)

-Priorities should be established for data entry on to MSRTS because of budget limitations. Suggestions: actives before formers and secondary before elementary because of course placement and credit acceptance.
-Train migrant and non-migrant staff in utilization of MSRTS
-Use TEAMS competency test data from Texas instead of SIS (Skills Information System) on MSRTS
-Increase use of MSRTS at school site level by schools, registrars, and counselors

Identification and Recruitment

-Improve identification and recruitment of secondary students.
-All states should have at least one year round recruiter.
-All states should use a family form on the COE (Certificate of Eligibility) to facilitate identification of all the children in the family.
-Increase identification and services to dropouts at the national level.

These recommendations were developed by the entire group through extensive discussion leading to consensus. The group did not prioritize the items because perspectives varied depending on state represented and the position of the participant. It was also recognized that many of the

recommendations could be carried out on a local or state level even if they were not instituted nationally, and still be beneficial to migrant students. The suggestion of the MESA staff was that local and state agencies begin implementing those practices that are appropriate to their needs, while continuing to advocate for changes nationally.